CONTROLLING YOUR EMOTIONS IN SPORTS

Learn the 5 Steps for Emotional Control in Athletic Competition
Which of these apply to you?

- Passionate about your interests and sport(s)
- Sometimes feel afraid or nervous before or during practice/games
- Emotions affect your performance from time to time
- Sometimes get overly upset or find yourself in a bad mood
- Don’t have total control over your emotions
This Drill’s Outcomes

1. Understand that mood and emotion can affect your performance

2. Learn a quick 5-step technique to control your emotions in athletics
Why is this Drill Important?

Having control over your Emotions in your sport can be the difference between success and failure.

This Drill Will Help Increase Your:

COMPOSITION ● MENTAL TOUGHNESS
Emotions in Sports

While playing with emotion is generally a good thing...

...too much emotion can make you act in ways that can hurt your performance.
Think Back

Think back to the last time you let your emotions control you.

It could have been after a mistake you made, a wrong call from the referee, or even an injury.
Your Reaction

Perhaps you reacted strongly.

Maybe said some things or acted in a way you regret.

No matter, it likely negatively affected your and your team’s performance.
You Made a Mistake

Afterward, you probably reflected on what happened & realized what you could have done better.

Take control of your emotions when things like this happen, don't let your emotions control you.
WHY
CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS?
Athletes that Cannot Control their Emotions...

Play timid
and/or
Make mistakes
Get the Worksheet
Controlling Your Emotions
5-Step Technique
Controlling Your Emotions

5-Step Technique

Playing your sport with emotion is generally a good thing. However, too much emotion can make you feel and act in ways that negatively affect your performance in your sport, as well as in your life.

You Can Take Control of Your Emotions
Do you ever feel nervous, afraid, or anxious? Do you ever get overly upset? Do these emotions ever affect your performance? These emotions can control you — but only if you allow them to. Learn the 5-Step Technique to Controlling Your Emotions to help take control of your emotions and improve your performance in your sport and life.

5-Step Technique to Controlling Your Emotions

STEP 1. PHYSICAL FOCUS - focus solely on your physical state

STEP 2. BREATHE - take a deep breath

STEP 3. RELAX - contract and then relax all your muscles

STEP 4. VISUALIZE - imagine yourself in a relaxing scene

STEP 5. REFOCUS - by visualizing a sport technique & giving yourself a positive command

STEP 1. PHYSICAL FOCUS

PHYSICAL FOCUS has you mentally "step back" from the emotional situation you find yourself in and to focus solely on your physical state. The purpose is to retrain your brain to stop you from entering into an emotional downward spiral.

HOW: Turn all your attention to your physical state. Notice your heart rate, your breathing, and how your muscles feel.

PRACTICE: First imagine a stressful situation in your sport and then step back from the situation in your mind and focus solely on how it makes your body feel.
SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?
5-Steps to Controlling Emotions

1. Physical Focus
2. Breathe
3. Relax
4. Visualize
5. Refocus
Step #1 - PHYSICAL FOCUS

• First, mentally “STEP BACK” from the situation and focus solely on your physical reaction.

• This can help separate the event from how you are actually feeling and keep you in the moment.
Step #1 - PHYSICAL FOCUS

How do you tend to react to negatively charged emotional events?

Think about and/or discuss
• Most people have an automatic reaction, making them feel as though they have no control.

• Launching the PHYSICAL FOCUS Step will retrain your brain to stop you from entering into an emotional downward spiral.
Imagine Yourself in this Scenario

The game is tied with just a few minutes to play.

Unfortunately, as you are about to score to put your team ahead, you get called for a penalty/foul that costs your team the possession.

The referee clearly made the wrong call, which makes you and your teammates very frustrated.

Close your eyes for a moment and truly imagine yourself here.
Your Scenario Reaction

- Consider your physical reaction. Can you imagine your heart beating faster and muscles tightening up? Can you imagine feeling the emotion build up?

- Remember to mentally “STEP BACK” and focus solely on your physical state for this first step.
NOW THAT YOU ARE FOCUSED ON PHYSICAL STATE

LET’S CHANGE IT!
Step #2 - BREATHE

• Intense emotions cause your body to go into "fight or flight" mode, which means many different chemicals are pumping through your body.

• This causes an increased heart rate, shallow breathing, and muscle tension.
Step #2 - BREATHE

Taking a big deep breath can help control the release of these chemicals as well as supply the body and brain with the sufficient oxygen to think clearly.
Try It Now - BREATHE

Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

Try this 2-3 times
Imagine Yourself in this Scenario Again

The game is tied with just a few minutes to play.

Unfortunately, as you are about to score to put your team ahead, you get called for a penalty/foul that costs your team the possession.

The referee clearly made the wrong call, which makes you and your teammates very frustrated.

Close your eyes for a moment and truly imagine yourself here.
Your Scenario Reaction

1. PHYSICAL FOCUS  Mentally “Step Back” and focus solely on your physical state.

2. BREATHE  Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

Practice these 2 steps together after imagining yourself in the scenario on the previous slide.
STEP #2 BREATHE starts the process of controlling your emotions through physical state change.

KEEP GOING!
Step #3 - RELAX

- The Deep Breath starts to relax your muscles and slows your heart rate.

- Now we want to fully control your emotions by reversing the “fight or flight” mode through a quick muscle relaxation technique.
Try it Now - RELAX

Contract all of your muscles at once from your forehead to your toes for a few seconds, and then relax them all.

Try this 2-3 times

This will help prepare your muscles to activate at a high level again after the emotional event.
If you feel that one part of your body is especially tense, spend a few extra seconds contracting and relaxing that muscle group.

Try this on 1-2 muscle groups for practice.
Imagine Yourself in this Scenario Again

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The referee clearly made the wrong call, which makes you and your teammates very frustrated.

Close your eyes for a moment and truly imagine yourself here.
Your Scenario Reaction

1. **PHYSICAL FOCUS**  Mentally “Step Back” and focus solely on your physical state.

2. **BREATHE**  Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

3. **RELAX**  Contract all of your muscles at once from your forehead to your toes for a few seconds, and then relax them all.

Practice these 3 steps together after imagining yourself in the scenario on the previous slide.
STEP #3 RELAX halts the body’s “fight or flight” mode and now is the time to take the final step of control.

TAKE FULL CONTROL!
Step #4 - VISUALIZE

• Now that the body is relaxed, time to relax the brain quickly.

• Next, you will choose a calming scene that you can visualize to fully extinguish the emotional response.
Choose Your Scene

Think of a nature scene or familiar, happy place that calms you.

** Write it down on your worksheet **

Visualize this: ____________________________________
Try it Now - VISUALIZE

Imagine yourself in your selected scene for a few seconds. Actually picture and feel yourself in that environment.

Simultaneously, imagine all of the stress of the emotional situation leaving your body.
Imagine Yourself in this Scenario Again

The game is tied with just a few minutes to play.

Unfortunately, as you are about to score to put your team ahead, you get called for a penalty/foul that costs your team the possession.

The referee clearly made the wrong call, which makes you and your teammates very frustrated.

Close your eyes for a moment and truly imagine yourself here.
Your Scenario Reaction

1. **PHYSICAL FOCUS** Mentally “Step Back” and focus solely on your physical state.

2. **BREATHE** Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

3. **RELAX** Contract all of your muscles at once from your forehead to your toes for a few seconds, and then relax them all.

4. **VISUALIZE** Imagine yourself in your selected relaxing scene and all of the stress of the emotional situation leaving your body.

Practice these 4 steps together after imagining yourself in the scenario on the previous slide.
STEP #4 VISUALIZE fully extinguishes the emotional response from your body.

NOW GET READY TO COMPETE!
Step #5 - REFOCUS

- The REFOCUS step puts you into a positive state ready to compete.

- This is done by

  1. Visualizing a movement/technique in your sport

  2. Give yourself a short, positive command
Think of a favorite technique that you’ve executed in the past or some other positive focal point for your sport. It needs to be something you can visualize in 1 second.

** Write it down on your worksheet **

Sport Visualization: ___________________________________________
Choose Your Short Command

After visualizing, you need to give yourself a short, positive command to finalize your new state of mind such as "Now!" or "Let's Go!" or "Let's Do This!" Choose something that will inspire you and get you ready to compete.

** Write it down on your worksheet **

Short Command: ______________________________________
Try it Now - REFOCUS

1. Visualize your selected sport technique

2. Say your selected short, positive command

This needs to be done in 2 seconds or less
Putting Them All Together
Imagine Yourself in this Scenario Again

The game is tied with just a few minutes to play.

Unfortunately, as you are about to score to put your team ahead, you get called for a penalty/foul that costs your team the possession.

The referee clearly made the wrong call, which makes you and your teammates very frustrated.

Close your eyes for a moment and truly imagine yourself here...
Practice the 5-Steps Together

1. PHYSICAL FOCUS  Mentally “Step Back” and focus solely on your physical state.

2. BREATHE  Take a deep breath, hold for a few seconds, and then release your muscle tension as you exhale your breath.

3. RELAX  Contract all of your muscles at once from your forehead to your toes for a few seconds, and then relax them all.

4. VISUALIZE  Imagine yourself in your selected relaxing scene and all of the stress of the emotional situation leaving your body.

5. REFOCUS  (1) Visualize your sport technique (2) Say your positive short command

With practice, you can complete this whole technique in 5-10 seconds
When to Use this Technique
When to use this Technique

1. Whenever you feel nervous, afraid, or anxious
2. Whenever something upsetting occurs
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Learn the 5 Steps for Emotional Control in Athletic Competition